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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC, WHA/EPSC, CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [AR](#) [EFIN](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS; 1/28/10; BUENOS AIRES

SUMMARY

¶1. Local newspapers extensively covered President Obama's State of the Union Address, leading their international sections. Reactions were mixed. Most newspapers reported positively, highlighting the President's plans regarding job creation and health care reform. Largest daily Clarin and right-leaning Buenos Aires Economico viewed the address as a reaction to dropping popularity and recent Republican criticism. End summary.

RECONNECTING WITH ORDINARY AMERICANS

¶2. Conservative paper La Nacion targeted President Obama's "strong call to the opposition" in its coverage, as he asked Democrats and Republicans to "overcome their differences" in order to "reach the objectives people want." Washington correspondent Silvia Pisani describes President Obama putting a lot of "passion" into his speech in order to "reconnect with the common citizen" who "has shown signs of impatience" with the President. Pisani concentrates on the main topics of the speech, including job creation, health care reform, and in a "surprising promise," President Obama's demand to double exports within five years.

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1226794

¶3. Pisani also wrote an opinion article in La Nacion commenting on the three R's from President Obama's address: "reconstruct, reconquer, and reconnect." Pisani details the President's desire to "reconstruct confidence, reconnect with Americans, and reconquer the public," along with the necessity of the President becoming a leader again. The journalist also notes that now that President Obama has been brought "down to earth," he can accomplish the three R's by being "less ambitious but effective" in carrying out his domestic agenda.

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1226798

¶4. Conservative daily La Prensa headlined the President's address with his promise to "not forget Americans that have lost their health insurance" and not to "abandon his fight for universal health care." Intent on showing the American public that he will "take the reigns of national problems," President Obama will not tolerate "the United States falling into the Second World." La Prensa also notes that the President desires to fight climate change, which includes building high-speed rail and developing clean energy.

¶5. Financial daily El Cronista, right-leaning Buenos Aires Económico, and daily Crítica concentrated coverage on the economic aspects of the address. El Cronista headlined its coverage with the President's promise to "open battle on government spending and unemployment," while Buenos Aires Económico noted that President Obama concluded that in order to win back popular support, he centered on what matters to the middle-class: their wallets. Crítica also wrote about economic issues and the President's strategy to reduce the federal deficit, but also domestic policy dominated the speech in lieu of foreign issues such as terrorism, Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Haiti.

<http://www.cronista.com/notas/219313-obama-pr-omete-librar-una-batal-la-contra-el-gasto-y-el-desempleo>

http://criticadigital.com/impresa/index.php?s_ecc=nota&nid=37624

SELLING THE DOMESTIC AGENDA

¶6. Largest Argentine daily Clarín focused on President Obama's move to the "center of the political spectrum" as he confronted a nation "believing less in his leadership each time." In an

"environment very different" from the President's inauguration last year, the article describes the President's plan to create jobs, reduce the fiscal deficit, and give fiscal aid to small businesses and companies that build new factories. Despite facing an "opposition determined to hinder his government" and with the Democratic Party "totally divided," as Clarín's Washington correspondent notes, President Obama promised to continue pushing for health care reform and "other topics from his initial agenda," including allowing homosexuals to serve in the military.

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/01/28/elmundo/i-02128761.htm>

¶7. Clarín also published two opinion articles commenting on the "decline of the middle class and the American Dream" and its relation to President Obama's ability to "reverse his [popularity] fall in his electoral base." The opinion articles suggest that "every time Wall Street rises, [economic] inequality worsens" in a country where 1 out of every 5 people "had serious problems giving food to their family" last year. In addition, the author writes about a University of California study that showed during the past decade, the average American income rose only 2.8% while the average income for the rich 1% rose 11%. These factors combined lead these commentators to believe that Americans are looking for President Obama to be more than the "manager of a rich nation" but rather the "leader of those that need him."

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/01/28/elmundo/i-02128501.htm>

¶8. Buenos Aires Económico published an opinion article analyzing how both President Obama's supporters and opponents look to "his impotent government with restless distrust." Democrats have started to distance themselves from the President's health care plan, while Republicans believe the President "does not know where he is going" except to "to bring the U.S. to the doorstep of catastrophe." While the President touted various economic programs to help the unemployed, the author opines that neither the unemployed nor the workers fearing losing their jobs believe that the President is "offering them another opportunity, another beginning."

MARTINEZ